DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 493 PS 018 775

TITLE	Five Position Statements of the Southern Association on Children Under 6 (SACUS): (1) Employer Sponsored Child Care; (2) Developmentally Appropriate Assessment; (3) Continuity of Learning for Four-to-Seven-Year-old Children; (4) Quality Child Care; (5) Multicultural Education
INSTITUTION	Southern Association on Children Under Six, Little Rock, Ark.
PUB DATE	90
NOTE	41p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Southern Association on Children Under Six, P.O. Box 5403, Brady Station, Little Rock, AR 72215 (set of 5 papers, $1.00).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Day Care; *Developmental Continuity; *Early Childhood Education; *Educational Quality; *Employer Supported Day Care; *Multicultural Education; Position Papers; *Student Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	Developmentally Appropriate Programs; *Southern Association on Children Under Six

ABSTRACT

Five position statements of the Southern Association on Children Under Six are presented in this document. The statement on developmentally appropriate assessment includes such topics as testing practices that harm young children; limitations of standardized testing; misuses of test data; and assessment criteria. The statement on continuity of learning addresses the topics of children as learners; early childhood professionals and paraprofessionals; educational and child care settings for young children; and recommendations. The statement on quality of child care concerns children's needs to: (1) feel safe and comfortable; (2) be involved in meaningful activities; (3) be supported as full-time learners; (4) learn how to live comfortably with others; (5) have their physical development supported; (6) be given lessons on health, nutrition, and safety; (7) feel that there is consistency in their lives; and (8) know that parents and caregivers care about them. The statement on multicultural education concerns ways in which an improved understanding of multicultural education can be developed; ways in which teachers and parents can share the responsibility of enhancing children's multicultural awareness; and recommendations for keeping the learning environment consistently multiethnic. The statement on employer-sponsored child care focuses on the issues of who needs child care, why employers should care about child care, what employers can do, and what the options for employer-supported care are. Selected references are cited. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED319493

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FIVE POSITION STATEMENTS OF THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON CHILDREN UNDER 6 (SACUS): (1) EMPLOYER SPONSORED CHILD CARE; (2) DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT; (3) CONTINUITY OF LEARNING FOR FOUR-TO-SEVEN-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN; (4) QUALITY CHILD CARE; (5) MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Southern Assn. on Children Under Six

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON CHILDREN UNDER SIX
P.O. Box 5403
Brady Station
Little Rock, AR 72215

PS 018775

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Employer Sponsored Child Care

A POSITION STATEMENT

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON CHILDREN UNDER SIX

Who needs child care?

Young children whose parents are the workers in offices, retail shops, service and manufacturing industries need care. Due to economic need and changes in the composition of the American family, an increasing number of women are working outside of the home. By 1986, 65 percent of all mothers with children under the age of 14 were in the workforce. This figure includes a majority of mothers with children under 3 years of age.

As we move into the decade of the 1990's, the presence of significant numbers of women in the workplace will continue to increase. Mothers who are now working outside of the home represent a shift in women's role from caregiver to economic provider. Child care, which was once an exclusive concern of the home, extended family and neighborhood has moved with the workers into the new community of the workplace. Children, their parents, and employers all need available, affordable and high quality child care.

The Southern Association of Children Under Six is a non-profit educational organization whose purpose is to advocate for young children and their families. SACUS believes that child care is an issue central to the work place and offers the following position statement to guide competitive employers interested in strengthening the bond between the workplace and the family.

Why should employers care about child care?

Child care is good business. To fail to recognize it as an issue of legitimate business concern is to ignore the real economic consequences of child care. Women have brought the need for child care with them as they have moved from the home into the workplace.

In the 1990's, changes in the U.S. and world economy will combine with significant demographic trends to make the workplace very difference than today. In this coming decade, 64 percent of the new workers will be women, 15 percent will be white males and the percentage of minority and immigrant workers will increase. The fastest growing jobs will require the highest education and skill levels and those workers will expect an employer to be responsive to family concerns. All of these factors will combine to position child care as an issue that will impact the competitive status of companies.

The child care concerns of workers can have a significant bottom line impact for companies. These can be registered in the following ways.

Absenteeism
A worker's time away from the job to deal with child care is an expense for an employer.
Productivity
Parents who are not worried about their children's care can focus on their jobs.
Recruitment
The company whose policies reflect the importance of the family and work connection will attract the best of the new workers.
Turnover
The cost to interview, hire and train workers is high. Employers who recognize and respond to child care as a concern will retain workers.
Public relations
The positive effect of employer interest in child care is measurable both internally and with the community at large.

What can employers do?

Employers can begin by recognizing that the need for child care is an issue that is not going to go away. In addition, employers will need to be willing to undertake a process of internal information gathering and education which will increase an understanding of the issue. The specific practices and goals and values of the company are some of the factors which will need to be examined. This look at the relationship of child care to the workplace should allow the breadth and depth of concern and need to be openly examined.

The major activities to be undertaken as a part of the review process should include the following elements.

Planning

This is often an internal process in which an individual or small group, with the resources and commitment of the company organization, defines the scope of the information gathering activity. A review of external consultant resources to assist the process should be conducted.

Research

This component should include a variety of activities. Employee surveys or needs assessments, interviews with different levels of management, focus group discussions and visits to models of existing community resources could all be done. The greater the variety of activities undertaken, the more complete and informed the insight and understanding of the problem will be.

Choice of action

The knowledge and understanding gained from the planning and research activities will guide the choice of a specific method of response to the need for child care. Appropriate options of response must match the will and resources of the company. Generally, employers choose to respond to the child care issue in one or more of four ways: information, time management, financial assistance and direct services.

What are the options?

The options for response to the need for child care are varied. No one option will solve all of the problems or address all of the workforce needs for child care.

Each company should choose one or more combinations of options which match the resources and will of the organization to the need. Ultimately, the choice is to acknowledge the legitimacy of family concerns in the workplace and resolve to create a response. The vision of a goal for child care that eases the strain of balancing work and family responsibilities values the employee as a productive business partner. Today's children will be tomorrow's workers. Children's quality care today is what matters.

Following is a brief overview of the options available for employer supported child care.

Parent education
Worksite training and seminar sessions which address a wide variety of child growth and development issues and common parenting concerns.

Flexible work policies
A variety of alternative scheduling arrangments which allow the employee time and location options for work tasks. This allows improved coordination of work and family responsibilities.

Vouchers and discounts
Company subsidized employee's child care costs in caregiving settings chosen by the parent or pre-selected by the company thru negotiated discounts.

Flexible benefits
An assortment of options of taxable and non-taxable benefits which allow employees to choose and individualize a benefit plan.

Resource and referral
An information service which provides employees with names and addresses of a variety of specific child care providers, advice on selecting quality care and general child care resources.

Family day care network
A company sponsored organization of in-home child care providers recruited, trained and provided with a variety of

support services.

On-site or near-site center

Employer sponsored child care center which is developed and operated for the benefit of employee's children. Management can be provided internally or contracted. Issues of quality impact the development and operation costs and the on-going delivery of child care services.

Consortium

An employer sponsored child care center developed and operated with the combined resources or two or more companies.

Sick child care

Subsidized or contracted care for employee's children who are ill and unable to be cared for in their usual provider setting.

REFERENCES

U.S. Department of Labor (1988). Child Care A Workforce Issue Report of The Secretary's Task Force April 1988. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office

Virginia Department for Children (1989). Employer-Sponsored Child Care: An Array of Options. Commonwealth of Virginia.

U.S. Department of Labort, Office of the Secretary, Women's Bureau. (Undated) Work and Family Resource Kit.

Harris, L. & Bass, R. & Wurf, N. (1989). The Philip Morris Companies Inc. Family Survey II: Child Care. New York, N.Y.: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

Johnston, W.B. and Packer, A.E. (1987). Workforce 2000 Work and Workers for the Twenty-first Century. Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute, Inc.

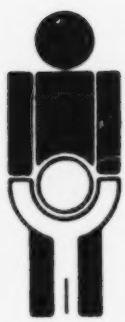
POSITION PAPER DEVELOPER
Mary Jo Deck, child care consultant, Atlanta, GA

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON CHILDREN
UNDER SIX
P.O. BOX 5403 Brady Station
Little Rock, AR 72215
501-663-0353

First Printing, 1990

Developmentally Appropriate Assessment

A POSITION PAPER



SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON
CHILDREN UNDER SIX

11

The use of standardized tests has been increasing rapidly across the United States. An estimated 200 million examinations are given annually to children from preschool through grade 12. The South has been in the forefront of the testing explosion. Throughout the region, both school reform and accountability have been mistakenly equated with increases in test scores.

More recently, parents, teachers, and other experts have expressed concern over the use of tests and the harmful effects on children and their schools. A trend is developing in the southern states to abandon standardized testing in favor of developmentally appropriate means of assessment. Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas and Arizona have recognized the harmful effects and moved to stop some forms of testing for young children.

The Southern Association on Children Under Six recommends a ban of the routine, mass use of standardized intelligence, achievement, readiness and developmental screening tests for young children through the age or eight.

SACUS recognizes and endorses the important role of assessment in planning quality programs for young children. However, assessment practices must be developmentally appropriate and related to curriculum goals. The routine, mass use of standardized tests is inconsistent with these goals and often causes serious harm to both individual children and to educational programs.

Testing Practices Harm Young Children

Testing encourages *narrow academic programs.* Many teachers feel driven to teach to the test and therefore focus on drill, memorization, and force-fed bits of conventional information which may be on a test. School practices which require children to solve problems, respond to open-ended questions, be creative, and to take responsibility for their own learning are often overlooked as teachers teach to the test. Content which is not tested is frequently ignored, such as the arts and the sciences.

Tests are often culturally biased and discriminate

against poor and minority children. Test scores sometimes reflect family income as well as achievement of ability. The test items are usually drawn from middle-class culture and therefore middle-class children are more likely to know the answers. This is unfair to children from a disadvantaged environment.

Test scores are often used by teachers and parents to label children as "average", "slowlearner", "gifted", or "special education". These labels tend to hide the beauty and uniqueness of individual children and to define human differences as problems. Labeling, often based on faulty data, can cause life long harm to children whose true potential is hidden by the label.

Tests are often the sole or primary basis for tracking children and for determining promotion to a grade, placement within class groups, or enrollment in a special program such as transitional first grade, or programs for the gifted. Children placed in a track, particularly in the "low group", are given watered down content that creates unequal opportunities to learn. This virtually guarantees that they will not do well on future tests and will be tracked for life. Since tests descriminate against poor and minority children, this causes re-segregation by grouping in schools. Retention is not educationally helpful and leads to school drop-out.

Testing for young children is often stressful. The tension and anxiety that teachers and parents feel about tests are often communicated to children. This may cause a fear of tests, dislike for school, and feelings of inadequacy on the part of children.

Limitations of Standardized Testing

Young children are *not good test-takers*. They are not physically adept at the skills required for test taking, which include managing a pencil, "bubbling-in", visual discrimination, sitting for long periods, following verbal directions, and are easily influenced by the test-giver.

The most important aspect of assessment is validity—that is, the extent to which an instrument measures what it chaims to measure. The two most common types of early childhood instruments are intelligence tests and readiness tests. Because there is little agreement within

the profession on a definition of intelligence and what constitutes school readiness there can be no confidence that tests measure either. Achievement tests are valid only if they test what children are expected to learn. For example, if a school has the goal of creative story telling but the test has no items on story telling, the test is not valid for this school.

Tests are generally of *low technical quality*. The Center for the Study of Evaluation reviewed some 800 pubished standardized tests for young children including over 3,900 sub-tests and found less than one percent to be minimally satisfactory.

Misuses of Test Data

Tests do not measure accountability. Achievement tests do not measure what children are learning and do not provide accurate information about the education of children. Therefore, test data should not be used as proof of the quality of the education which children receive.

The public and professionals alike share a common misconception that test scores are objective and scientific. This faulty assumption leads to an unjustified confidence in and reliance on test scores for decision making. This means that judgements about children are based on faulty data rather than data which reflect each child's personal course of development.

People outside the profession often misuse tests for their own purposes. Politicians frequently use test scores as part of their campaigns to show a vote for them will be a vote for better education. Test scores are frequently misused to justify budget requests, to judge teachers, and to determine merit pay. Schools frequently misuse tests to compare classrooms of children, screen out the "undesirable" and those children who supposedly cannot benefit from their program.

Appropriate Assessment

Gathering information about children to make good judgement about their learning and development is a central part of the teacher's role. Teachers must make daily decisions about children which should be profes-

sional judgements based on accurate and appropriate information. A good assessment process must help children and never cause them harm.

Criteria of Good Assessment

Assessment must be *valid*. It must provide information related to the goals and objectives of each program.

Assessment should *not include* standardized tests, which are group administered, pencil and paper, multiple choice, and claim to measure achievement.

Assessment must deal with the *whole child*. Programs must have goals and assessment processes which relate to children's physical, social, emotional, and mental development.

Assessment must involve *repeated observations*. Many observations help teachers find patterns of behavior and avoid quick decisions which may be based on unusual behavior by children.

Assessment must be *continuous* over time. Each child should be compared to his or her own individual course of development over time rather than to average behavior for a group.

Assessment must use a *variety of methods*. Gathering a wide variety of information from different sources enables informed and professional decisions.

Assessment information must be used to change the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the children in the program.

Good Assessment Practices

Information collected should be placed in an *assessment portfolio* which should be kept for each child. A portfolio is a record of the teacher's observations and comments as well as a wide selection of the representative work which has been selected by the child and teacher together. The portfolio should include, but not limited to:

Work samples

A collection of informal and formal work, academic and non-academic, that can include samples of writing (including drafts of work); processes and results of inves-

tigations, problem solving, and experiements, including photographs of products; art work; audiotapes and "running record" of the child's reading; interviews; and lists of books read.

Teacher observations

These can be informal notes on the child's classroom, social and academic interactions, as well as more formal observation records of activities and progress. Parent and other sources of information can be included.

Checklists and inventories

A checklist can indicate activities across a range of developmentally appropriate tasks, abilities and competencies in social, physical, intellectual, emotional and language areas. In general, observations should be based on regular activity, not only specially constructed or artificial activities such as tests.

Parent conferences

Information should be gathered from the parent's perspective about developmental relationships within the family. This may include the parent's perspective of the social and emotional climate in the home.

Teacher constructed tests or projects

Specific feedback on teacher-initiated or child-chosen learning tasks, to complement work samples and teacher observations with more structured or formal work.

Referral decisions

When the opinion of another professional is required for eye examination, speech and hearing evaluation, or psychological screening, a record of the reasons for the referral as well as outcomes should be included.

Cautions on Assessment

Assessment information is not to be used as tests for grading labeling, grouping, or retaining children.

Children have different styles, rates, and motivations for learning.

Expect diversity among children and treat these differences with respect and dignity.

All forms of assessment and evaluation can be misused and influenced by biases about race, gender, income level, and culture. Each individual must guard against personal bias influencing professional behavior.

POSITION PAPER DEVELOPERS

Mac H. Brown, University of South Carolina
Stephen Graves, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Frances D. Arnold, Auburn University at Montgomery
Gloria Correro, Mississippi State University
Tom Jambor, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Constance Kamii, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Monty Neill, National Center for Fair and Open Testing, 342 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH THE MISUSE OF TESTS

These national associations have expressed concern over the misuse and abuse of testing practices related to young children.

Association of Childhood Education International
National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education
National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Education Association
National Association of Early Childhood Specialists

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON CHILDREN
UNDER SIX
P.O. Box 5403 Brady Station
Little Rock, AR 72215
501-663-0353

First Printing, 1990

Continuity of Learning for Four-to-Seven-Year-Old Children

A POSITION STATEMENT

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON
CHILDREN UNDER SIX

The Southern Association on Children Under Six (SACUS) is an organization of over 16,000 educators, child care professionals, and other persons interested in quality child care and education. These individuals, mostly residents of 13 southern states, recognize the need for continuity of learning experiences for four- to seven-year-old children.

The need for rich, continuous, integrated experiences for young children is of concern as people in the South move from an agrarian society, past an industrialized society, and into the global society of an information age. Demographic changes and concerns for quality education for all children make vital the nurturing of each child to develop his or her potential as a learner and as a fully-functioning future citizen.

The quality of child care and educational programs in which children ages four to seven are engaged in learning will have a great impact on their life-long dispositions for learning. Current educational concerns suggest a reexamination of policies, practices, and organizational approaches. To this end, SACUS offers this position statement as a guide for promoting the continuity of learning experiences. Its recommendations are formulated from beliefs about how children learn, the settings in which they are engaged in learning, and the roles professionals and paraprofessionals assume in the teaching and learning process.

Children as Learners

The position of SACUS is that:

Children learn and grow as whole persons. It is impossible to separate cognitive and affective growth. Children's growth must be encouraged in several areas: cognitive, social, creative, aesthetic, physical, and personal-emotional. Learners' self concepts affect their abilities to learn and their eagerness to learn.

Children learn through active engagement and through conversation and dialogue concerning their experiences. Young children are concrete learners. They must construct knowledge of things, events, people, and relationships based on direct, sensory experiences. Manipulation and experimentation help children learn as

does talking about experiences. Natural interactive conversation enhances learning more than explaining or "talking to" children does.

All children can learn, and given appropriate settings, want to learn. Children are seekers of knowledge. They are persistent, curious, and creative.

Children learn quickly when material is presented in meaningful ways at appropriate times. Artificial sequences set up by adults for learning of topics such as the alphabet and basic facts in mathematics may not suit the ways children learn and the ways their brains function.

Children exhibit different learning styles. While some children learn best through visual means, oral means, or kinesthetic means, few meaningful experiences offer just one kind of stimuli. Children benefit from multisensory experiences and opportunities to choose from a rich variety of materials to both capitalize on their preferred learning styles and to enhance their weaker modes of learning.

Children grow and develop through predictable stages, but at individual rates. For any group of young children, educators, and caregivers must attend to the needs of children on a variety of levels.

Early Childhood Professionals and Paraprofessionals

The position of SACUS is that:

Early childhood educators and caregivers need special training and education for working with young children. Such training and education should include knowledge of human development, knowledge of appropriate curriculum for young children, knowledge of appropriate techniques for managing children's behavior, and knowledge of a variety of appropriate techniques for evaluating children's progress toward appropriate goals. Training and education should also include supervised field work with young children and experienced early childhood education professionals to develop and extend skills using the knowledge acquired.

Early chilldhood educators and caregivers need opportunities for continued growth. Through experiences

such as inservice education, professional reading and discussion, and attendance at professional meetings, early childhood workers can maintain their knowledge, improve their skills, share ideas with others, and maintain their motivation.

Early childhood educators and caregivers need opportunities to develop collegial relationships with others. Collegiality promotes solving problems, sharing ideas and perceptions, as well as building of feelings of support and working toward common goals. It also empowers teachers to do what they know is right in educating children. Early childhood educators should be receptive and active in working with a community of people who care about children. This community may include children's family members, health care professionals, social workers, and legislators.

•Early childhood educators and caregivers should exhibit genuine caring attitudes for young children. People who work with young children must show—through actions, and words—kindness, respect, and appreciation of young children.

Early childhood educators and caregivers should be interested in and skilled at studying children. They should be able to observe children, interpret behavior clues, and base their actions on the actions and reactions of children. Through such a process of "informed practice", the needs of children are best served.

Early childhood educators and caregivers should be decision-makers. They should determine what is taught to young children, and what experiences and materials will best facilitate children's learning.

Educational and Child Care Settings for Young Children

The position of SACUS is that:

Early childhood settings should be homelike and offer comfort, security, and support. In such an atmosphere, children feel at ease and can do their best work.

Class and group sizes should be limited. This ensures individual attention and reduces stress and tension often associated with larger groups.

The curriculum should include a wide variety of

topics and subjects. The arts are considered basic as are traditional curriculum areas such as language, mathematics, science, and social learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for each child to develop socially, aesthetically, creatively, and physically as well as intellectually. Attention is given to health, nutrition, and physical development.

Educators should provide settings with a rich variety of quality resource materials such as books, games, manipulatives, pictures, and posters. Educators also encourage children to investigate and use the natural world.

The setting should make appropriate use of technology. Technological aids such as computers, television, and projectors should be balanced with hands-on work and conversation. Creative, interactive computer programs are more appropriate than didactic, recall-level programs.

The setting should provide a balance of large group, small group, and individual experiences. Adults know and appreciate the strengths and limitations of each group size.

Personnel in early childhood settings should encourage cooperative learning. Groups of children work together often; they help each other and share ideas. Often adults select group members to facilitate learning; at times children choose groups or group members according to interests and personal preferences.

Educators should use a variety of appropriate assessment techniques rather than depending on formal testing to provide data for decision making. Adults make judgments based on data gathered over a period of time. The best form of assessment is thoughtful, careful observation.

Adults in the setting should value communication with parents. Because family attitudes have a far-reaching effect of the education of young children, educators consider parents part of an education team supporting and fostering the learning and development of children. They listen to parents and routinely involve parents in problem solving, curriculum building, and decision making.

Recommendations

To promote the continuity of learning experiences in child care and educational settings, SACUS members make the following recommendations:

Educators should consider implementation of early childhood units to promote an integrated, continuous-progress environment for a number of years. Such units are described by the National Association of State Boards of Education as parts of elementary schools that "provide a new pedagogy for working with children ages 4-8 and a focal point for increased services to preschool children and their parents." Such programs would work in "partnerships with other early childhood programs and community agencies to build and improve services for young children and their parents" (1988, p. vii-viii).

Formalization of learning or emphasis on academics is unsuitable for children ages four to seven. Programs that emphasize learning are more suitable. Young children learn best through engagement, real experiences with concrete materials, and natural conversation. Children must have opportunities to construct knowledge and apply that knowledge in meaningful problem solving.

Transitions from year to year or level to level in schooling and child care centers should be planned to fit the needs of children and to facilitate continuous learning. Dramatic changes in programs for young children based on the idea that children have passed from one level to another or that children have attained another year in age are often artificial. Such changes do little to enhance learning and may cause stress in children and their families. Principles and practices that are suitable for four-year olds are, in most instances, applicable to seven-year olds. Content should vary at levels, but must be planned to be meaningful and interesting to young children.

Early childhood educators and caregivers should plan and implement curriculum and teaching methods according to the stage and interests of the children they teach. Rather than getting the children "ready" for the curriculum, adults should get the curriculum "ready" to suit the developmental levels, needs, and interests of

children. Programs should meet the needs of children who are culturally and linguistically diverse as well as those who need special challenges or specially-designed experiences to help them meet their potentials. Educators should plan experiences and programs to meet the heterogeneous learning styles, levels, and needs of children so that all can experience success. Physical facilities, equipment, and materials should be built, remodeled, or selected to fit the needs and learning styles of young children.

Early childhood educators and caregivers should use methods of discipline that are positive and promote self-regulation. Physical punishment, sarcasm, and abusive language model aggression and demean children. Instead adults must focus on means of discipline that enhance self control, promote a positive self-concept, and encourage child-initiated problem-solving behaviors such as negotiation with peers.

Assessment of children is conducted for the purpose of planning and improving programs for children rather than to label children or determine whether children meet pre-existing standards for early childhood education. Programs should allow for continuous progress and learning at the child's own pace and consistent with his or her stage of growth and development.

Educators should work with parents and families in educating children. Educators must recognize that parents are children's first teachers and are intimately involved with children in a way that educators are not. Parents and educators must work as a team with both programs and children so that they can realize their full potential.

Interagency coordination and cooperation are essential for effective and optimal education of children. Team approaches to problem solving accomplish more than individual or single agency efforts.

Educators and care-givers must work for public awareness and acceptance of what developmentally-based programs are and can achieve. Such awareness and acceptance will help to promote respect for professionals who work with young children and will generate legislative support of quality educational programs for four- to seven-year olds.

REFERENCES

California State Department of Education. (1988). *Here They Come: Ready or Not! Report of the School Readiness Task Force.* Sacramento, CA.

Children's Defense Fund. (1989). *An Agenda for the 1990's: A Vision for America's Future.* Washington, D.C.

National Association of State Boards of Education. (1988). *Right from the Start: The Report of the NASBE Task Force on Early Childhood Education.* Alexandria, VA.

Phillips, D.A. (ed.). (1987). *Quality in Child Care: What Does Research Tell Us?* Washington, D.C.: National Association for Education of Young Children.

Warger, C. (ed.). (1988). *A Resource Guide to Public School Early Childhood Programs.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

POSITION PAPER DEVELOPERS

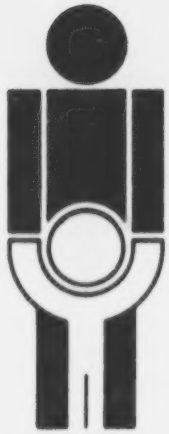
Jean M. Shaw, The University of Mississippi
Mary Jo Puckett Cliatt, The University of Mississippi
Peggy Emerson, The University of Mississippi
Cindy Leigh, The University of Mississippi
Janet Perry, South Carolina State Department of Education

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON CHILDREN UNDER SIX
P.O. Box 5403 Brady Station
Little Rock, AR 72215
501-663-0353

First Printing, 1990

Quality Child Care

Position Statement



The Southern Association
on Children Under Six

Quality Child Care

Two significant social changes in the United States over the past three decades have greatly affected American family life and child rearing practices. The movement of the majority of mothers of young children into the work force and the increase in numbers of young children who live in single parent households have made the care of children outside the home an essential part of the child rearing system. Nearly half of the country's infants and toddlers, more than half of its preschool children, and two thirds of its school age children are entrusted daily to some form of supplementary care. It is the responsibility of early childhood professionals, parents, and the general public to ensure that the care these children receive is of high quality.

The early years of a child's life are especially critical to his* total development. Growth is particularly rapid. Complex motor-skills evolve as sensory-neural and muscular systems are coordinated. Intellectual development occurs at a rate unequaled in any other period. Language is acquired and grammatical forms are mastered. Patterns of dealing with feelings and of relating to others are established.

During the early childhood period the child develops attitudes that will likely last a lifetime. He decides whether he can trust others. He learns whether the world is a comfortable, stimulating, responsive place or the discouraging opposite--uncomfortable, boring, belittling, non-supportive and non-caring. He develops his concept of himself. He finds that he is a worthy, valued, able, learning, problem-solving individual; or he comes to perceive himself as worthless, helpless, and inadequate. He learns to communicate his ideas and to use language to influence others; or he fails to develop fluent verbal skills.

Growth in every area of development is the result of the child's interaction with his environment. The *quality* of all aspects of that environment and of his interaction with it significantly affect his development. His relationships with adults and peers, the kind of experiences he has with materials and equipment, the ways in which his thrusts to explore and learn are supported, and the attitudes and values which he

learns in his day-to-day living have a cumulative effect on his future.

The kind of supplementary care provided is, therefore, a major influence in a child's development. Child care lasts all day long, five days a week, twelve months a year. It is the environment in which most of the child's waking hours are spent. The quality of that care is of vital consequence.

Although there is a wide variety of caregiving arrangements for children of various age levels, the quality of any form of care for any child is dependent on the caregiver's response to the question, "For whom does care exist?" Care can be of high quality only if the caregiver is able to meet, for a large part of the day, the child's need for experiences which support his development as a human being. Quality child care must supplement and extend provisions made for the child's development in his home—to protect, nurture, and educate him.

The Board of Directors of the Southern Association on Children Under Six takes the position that the child has certain fundamental needs that must be met in care.

The Child Needs to Feel That the Situation Is a Safe and Comfortable Place for Him to Be

High quality care must, therefore,

- Be staffed by adults who have the capacity to enjoy and appreciate the child, accept his child-like characteristics, and have reasonable expectations for his behavior and for his development.
- Provide for and support his gradual separation from his parent.
- Provide for consistent care by the same caretakers.
- Insure that he is greeted on arrival, listened to attentively, and given interesting things to do.
- Establish a relaxed, comfortable order to his day.
- Help him learn to deal with his own strong feelings.

The Child Needs to Learn to Feel Good About Himself

High quality care must, therefore,

- Demonstrate genuine respect for his individuality and cultural background.
- Provide activities which are suitable to his level of understanding but which also stimulate him to move ahead.
- Hold expectations which are reasonable for him.
- Respect him as a competent, adequate person who is in the *process* of learning and growing.
- Encourage his independence while meeting his dependency needs.
- Provide him with opportunities to make choices, solve problems, and achieve what he wants to achieve.
- Let him be involved in the real work of the center or home—setting the table, getting out and putting away equipment and cleaning up.
- Guide his behavior in positive, non-threatening, non-punitive ways.
- Establish necessary limits, define them in the context of his experience, and enforce them consistently.

A Child Needs to be Fully Employed in Activities that are Meaningful to Him—That Support Him in His Full Time Quest to Learn

High quality care must, therefore,

- Support curiosity—cue to the child that it is good to thrust for knowledge.
- Value play as the child's natural mode of learning and support it with materials and guidance that assure growth through play.
- Base curriculum on the knowledge that young children learn through their own first hand experiences with people, places and things; through appropriate help from adults in mediating and interpreting that experience; and through representing knowledge and experience in symbolic play and language.
- Recognize that little learning occurs from direct instruction and that early imposition of formal instruction and paper and pencil activities may be detrimental.
- Provide a rich variety of materials to manipulate and explore: sand, water,

blocks, puzzles, construction materials, activities with animals and with growing plants.

- Provide activities such as trips into the community and visitors to the center to extend the child's experience beyond the home and child care facility.
- Provide opportunities to build on and expand knowledge gained concretely in experience; supply language and vocabulary to express concepts and offer books, pictures, poems, and songs that are closely related to his life experiences.
- Encourage his thinking about and expressing knowledge and experiences with the world by supplying equipment and dress up clothes for dramatic play, blocks, wood working, art and other materials for symbolization.
- Foster thinking, learning and language development through frequent and individual conversations with the child.

A Child Needs to Develop Ability to Live Comfortably with Other Children and Adults

High quality care must, therefore,

- Help the child feel that he has a significant place in the group and in the affections of the adults and children.
- Provide support that helps children grow in ability to interact with each other.
- Be staffed by adults who can interpret children's behavior and feelings to each other in ways by which the personal worth and rights of each child are respected.
- Help children find solutions to conflicts and deal with hostility and aggression in positive ways.

A Child Needs to Have His Physical Development Supported and be Helped to Learn Health, Nutritional and Safety Practices.

High quality care must, therefore,

- Provide a physical environment that is

clean, well maintained and free from dangers.

- Supervise children's activities and teach personal safety, nutrition and health practices in the context of daily living.
- Provide nutritious meals and snacks.
- Help the child develop interest in foods and good eating habits by assisting in good preparation where appropriate and by making snacks and mealtime interesting pleasant experiences.
- Provide materials which encourage physical activity and mastery of large and small motor skills.
- Schedule a day's activities so that there is a balance between active and quiet play and provisions for rest.
- Take precautions against the spread of illness from child to child and adult to child.

The Child in Care Needs to Feel that There Is Consistency in His Life and a Shared Concern for Him Among the Important People in His Life—His Parents and His Caregivers.

High quality care must, therefore,

- Be staffed by adults who have respect and concern for parents, who recognize that parents are the most significant influences in the child's life, and who are able to relate to parents in an empathetic way that recognizes feelings and concerns.
- Work to keep parents attached to and involved in their child's life: report what happens at school; know what is occurring in the home; share joy in achievements; and help parents recognize children's needs and appreciate learning that occurs.
- Provide opportunities for regular, ongoing communication between parents and caregivers: talk informally at arrival and departure times; hold scheduled conferences; use telephone calls and written notes.
- Keep records that document progress and facilitate accurate communication.
- Welcome parents to visit and encourage

such contributions as they are able to make.

The significant indicators of quality addressed in this statement are relatively intangible and difficult to regulate. However research and practice have demonstrated that programs which provide quality care have three factors in common: small group size; high ratio of adults to children; and caregivers who are trained in early childhood development and education. Each of these factors is essential to the personal day to day interaction that satisfies children's needs.

The Southern Association on Children Under Six has repeatedly taken a position in support of licensing for all child care programs. Though licensing is not in itself assurance of quality, it is the only legal protection for the safety and well-being of children in care and the only chance that a child care facility will be monitored for adherence to even minimum standards. The Association, therefore, believes that providers of high quality programs support regulation, meet licensing requirements for their programs, and work for licensing standards that reflect the best that is known about good programs for children.

The need for child care is a reality in today's world. High quality care can be a positive force in the lives of children and their families. For their future and the future of the society, they must have nothing less.

References

Abt Associates (1979). *Executive summary. Children at the center: Final report of the national day care study*. Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Dickerson, M. & Ross, M. K. (1985). Acting on what we know: Child care. In K.J. Swick & K. Castle (eds.). *Acting on what we know: Developing effective programs for young children*. Little Rock, AR.: Southern Association on Children Under Six.

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (1984). *Accreditation criteria and procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs*.

Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

About the Association

The Southern Association on Children Under Six is a non-profit educational organization whose purpose is to work on behalf of young children and their families. One of its particular functions is the development and dissemination of knowledge and understanding of young children and their needs.

The fifteen thousand members of SACUS represent the wide range of people involved in the care, education and development of young children. Support for the provision of quality child care for families for whom such services are needed has been a major focus of the organization's efforts throughout its history.

Position Paper Developers

Mildred Dickerson is Professor of Early Childhood Education at James Madison University.

Martha Ross is Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at James Madison University.

Ruth Ann Crum is Assistant Professor of Home Economics at the University of Kentucky.

---

* For convenience the authors have used the masculine pronoun throughout this paper. It is not intended to convey sexism nor to imply that more boys than girls are in supplementary care.

The Southern Association on
Children Under Six
Box 5403
Brady Station
Little Rock, Arkansas 72215

501-663-0353

First Printing 1986
Second Printing 1988
Third Printing 1989

Multicultural Education

A Position Statement

SACUS

The Southern Association on Children Under Six (SACUS) is a nonprofit educational organization whose purpose is to work on behalf of children and their families. The organization's 16,000 members represent the wide range of people concerned with education and development of young children of diverse cultures. SACUS is aware of the need for children to be equipped with skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to live in a multicultural/multiethnic society. SACUS supports the philosophy that "multicultural education is more than merely one important idea in the educational galaxy; it is a living, growing, changing concept, responding to a living, growing, changing world."

As the United States becomes proliferated with people of diverse backgrounds and people who are keenly interested in maintaining their cultural identity, the need for a stronger multicultural focus becomes even greater. When such a focus becomes evident, there will be less discrimination based on race, sex, class, age, and physical handicaps and more understanding and acceptance of all people in society.

It is important that educators create and maintain a society in which there is mutual understanding and appreciation for people

whose backgrounds, customs, and values are different. For this reason, the SACUS Board of Directors has adopted the following position on multicultural education.

We believe that a better understanding of multicultural education is developed through:

Establishing goals and objectives that guide the enlightenment of teachers, parents, and children for the social, political, and economic realities encountered in a culturally diverse and complex society. Objectives should lead persons to:

- recognize, understand, and respect the nature of differences and similarities between cultures;
- know that differences exist within family groups of different and like cultures;
- develop a better understanding of the nature and impact of racism and the implications for positive or negative influence;
- develop a positive attitude toward one's own ethnicity, accepting and using that cultural background as motivation for becoming a significant contributor to society;
- provide developmentally appropriate experiences for children to become better equipped with skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to live in a multicultural/multiethnic society; and
- recognize similarities in cultures such as:
  - all children play games;
  - all cultures celebrate holidays;
  - all cultures have some family structure; and
  - all cultures provide for the same basic needs—food, clothing, and shelter.

We believe that a better understanding of multicultural education is developed through:

Eliminating MYTHS and MISCONCEPTIONS that tend to influence attitudes and actions toward those who are culturally different. Examples of myths and misconceptions currently existing are:

- All children of the same ethnic background have the same needs and intellectual abilities.
- All children who speak broken English and/or a dialect are intellectually deficient.
- All minorities are disadvantaged, lazy, and on welfare.
- All Oriental children are academically gifted.
- All minorities are inferior—e.g., Blacks, Hispanics, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, Cubans, Jamaicans, and Haitians.

Other myths and misconceptions exist about people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Clearly cultural stereotyping tends to develop negative attitudes about one's self and others, lessens cultural value perceptions and cultural appreciations, and destroys the democratic fiber of our society.

We believe that teachers and parents can share the responsibility of enhancing multicultural awareness in young children.

Many factors contribute to young children's multicultural awareness: culture, various kinds of media (TV programming, advertising, and children's books, for example), other chil-

dren, and adults. Parents and teachers play a major role in enhancing multicultural awareness in young children. Teachers can support parents in expanding their appreciation of diverse cultures. Parents can become involved in the classroom to promote cultural awareness in children. Suggested teacher roles to enhance multicultural awareness are:

- develop positive attitudes and values that are conveyed to children directly or indirectly;
- create learning environments for young children that facilitate their multicultural awareness and are developmentally appropriate, providing for active, concrete learning with other children and adults;
- use appropriate teaching, curricular, and interaction strategies to accommodate different learning styles;
- foster the development of self-esteem in young children, thereby increasing their ability to learn; and
- model for children respect and concern for all people.

Teachers can involve families in enhancing young children's multicultural awareness in the following ways:

- anticipate parents' responses and questions about class multicultural experiences;
- listen to parents in an accepting and nonjudgmental manner;
- bring parents together in informal situations to foster better communication between parents and teachers; and
- encourage parents to share their own culture with children.

Effective parent involvement can facilitate multicultural awareness, both inside and outside the classroom.

We recommend that the learning environment be kept consistently multiethnic through:

- a variety of multiethnic/multicultural and self-awareness materials updated consistently and provided as a part of the daily learning environment;
- planned and vicarious learning experiences that are flexible, unbiased, and inclusive of contributions from diverse cultures;
- human resources that serve as role models and material resources that focus on problems in a pluralistic society;
- instructional strategies relevant to the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of children of multiethnic heritage;
- instructional material that shows individuals from diverse cultural groups working in different occupational and social roles—material that is free from bias, omissions, and stereotypes;
- flexible scheduling that provides ample time and space where children can share their uniqueness through role play, art, conversation, and games; and
- continuous use of ideas and materials that represent cultures throughout the year and not just during a special holiday such as Black History Week, Christmas, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and the Chinese New Year. □

Selected References

Grant, Carl A., ed. *Multicultural Education: Commitments, Issues, and Applications.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Washington, D.C., 1977.

Hale-Benson, J. *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Hall, E. *Beyond Culture.* Garden City, N.J.: Anchor Books, 1977.

Kendall, F.E. *Diversity in the Classroom* (Chapters 1,2 and 3). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1983.

Swick, K.J., ed. *Multicultural Learning in Early Childhood Education.* Little Rock, Ark.: Southern Association on Children Under Six, 1987.

West, B. "Culture before Ethnicity," *Childhood Education,* 62, 1986.

Jimmie L. Battle, professor emeritus, Early Childhood Education, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Va.

Janet K. Black, associate professor, College of Education, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.

Marcia P. Guddemi, assistant professor, Education, University of South Carolina, Columbus, S.C.

Angelina O'Bar, Head Start director, Washita Valley Community Action Council, Chickasha, Okla.

The Southern Association on Children Under Six

Box 5403
Brady Station
Little Rock, Arkansas 72215
501-663-0353

First Printing 1988
Second Printing 1989
Third Printing 1989